

LEAF SPOT OF DRACAENA

C. Wehlburg

In some years a severe leaf spot disease occurs on Dracaena spp. and Pleomele spp. which renders a large percentage of the plants unsalable.

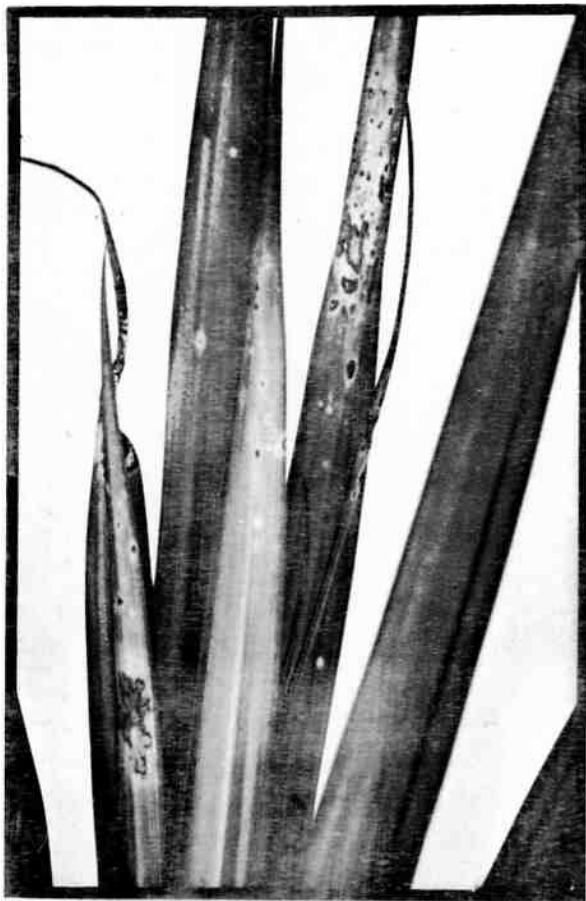


Fig. 1. *Dracaena marginata* showing leaf spots caused by *Fusarium moniliforme*.

Lesions on the leaves are circular or slightly elongated, reddish-brown, and surrounded by a yellow halo. Two or more spots may unite and produce larger, irregular lesions, sometimes affecting the whole width of the leaf blade.

The disease is caused by a fungus, *Fusarium moniliforme* Sheldon. Conidia of the pathogen are carried to healthy plants by air currents, water, etc., and if washed down into the leaf whorl, will germinate and infect the tender tissue of the young leaves. As these leaves unfold, the first visible symptoms are minute yellow specks which gradually enlarge and develop into the typical leaf spots (Fig. 1).

CONTROL. Applications of Daconil, mancozeb, or benomyl will give excellent control of the disease. Tribasic copper sulfate was found less effective. The disadvantage of applying fungicides on foliar ornamentals is that the residue tends to mar the appearance of the plants, especially if they are sprayed several times. However, this can be avoided if the control measures are applied to the plants in the rooting beds up to the time that they are potted. In this way the source of inoculum will be significantly reduced, and the plants removed from the rooting beds relatively free of the disease will need only one or two protective sprays until they are ready for market.